

Claims

What is claimed is:

5 1. A method for synchronizing the video output of a first personal video recorder with at least one second personal video recorder comprising the steps of:

10 selecting at a given one of the first and at least one second recorders a common program that resides in memory of each of the recorders; and

15 transmitting a signal from one of the first and at least one second recorder to the other of the first and at least one second personal video recorder to simultaneously initiate a start sequence for playback of the common program in each of the first and at least one second personal video recorder.

20 2. The method for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of receiving at least a portion of a broadcast program.

25 3. The method for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 2, further comprising the step of recording the at least a portion of a broadcast program on the first and at least one second personal video recorder.

30 4. The method for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of recording at least a portion of a broadcast program in a personal video recorder.

5. The method for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 1, wherein the signal is transmitted over the Internet.

5 6. The method for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of selecting at least one second personal video recorder having at least one program stored in memory in the at least one second personal video recorder.

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15 7. The method for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of simultaneously and synchronously viewing the common program in two different locations.

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8. The method for synchronizing the video output of personal recorders as recited in claim 1, wherein the first personal video recorder is controlled by a remote control device.

20 9. The method for synchronizing the video output of personal recorders as recited in claim 1, wherein control signals transmitted to the first personal video recorder by the remote control device also control the at least one second personal video recorders.

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10. The method for synchronizing the video output of personal recorders as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting a system status signal from the first personal video recorder to the at least one second personal video recorder.

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11. A system for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders comprising:

at least two personal video recorders having at least one common program stored in memory associated with each of the at 5 least two personal video recorders; and

a communication means operatively connected to the at least two personal video recorders for transmitting a signal from one of the at least two personal video recorders to the other of the at least two personal video recorders to simultaneously 10 initiate a start sequence for playback of the common program in each of the two personal video recorders.

12. The system for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 11 wherein the communication means is an Internet network.

13. The system for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 11 wherein the communication means is a telephone network.

14. The system for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 11 further comprising a television operatively connected to the personal video recorders.

15. The system for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 11 further comprising a remote control device for transmitting control signals to the personal video recorders.

16. In association with a first personal video recorder, an apparatus for synchronizing the video output of the first personal video recorder with at least a second personal video recorder, wherein each of the first and the second personal video recorder 5 has a common program stored in memory associated therewith, the apparatus comprising:

a control device associated with a processor and operative to transmit a signal from the first personal video recorder to the second personal video recorder for simultaneously 10 initiating a start sequence in each of the first and second personal video recorders.

17. The apparatus for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 16 wherein the signal 15 is transmitted over the Internet.

18. The apparatus for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 16, wherein the signal is transmitted over telephone lines.

19. The apparatus for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 16 wherein control signals transmitted to the first personal video recorder by the control device also control the second personal video recorder.

20. The apparatus for synchronizing the video output of personal video recorders as recited in claim 16 further comprising 25 a television operatively connected to the first and second personal video recorders.